

Do You Believe in Maude Adams?

By Henry Tyrrell

DO you believe in Maude Adams?

The question is a mate to that so eagerly propounded by Peter Pan, "Do you believe in fairies?" Only it is exactly the reverse. For, whereas Peter is pleading for your faith in the reality of something unreal, the query here is, Do you believe that the



lovely stage sprite who is sometimes Lady Babbie, sometimes Chanticleer, sometimes the troubadour Jester, and what not, ever materializes as a real human person whose name in broad daylight is Maude Adams?

Without assuming to settle the matter offhand, let us look up some of the evidences in this fascinating case.

There is a real Maude Adams. Two of the pictures on this page prove it. The other shows her in "Twelfth Night"

In the first place, there is the negative corroboration that whenever we read in the newspapers that the real-life Maude Adams is resting from overwork, or has gone abroad for meditation in the deserts of Palestine, or for a sojourn in a French convent, the current Maude Adams play, whatever it may be, simultaneously disappears from the stage, to reappear only when the return of the actress in person is announced. There is no understudy for this singularly winsome star.

Some claim to have known her as a summer neighbor at Onteora in the Catskills, or as the gracious chatelaine of Sandy Garth, up Long Island.

Others are sure they have seen her, or some one as much like her as any person on this side of the footlights can be, mingling with the fashionably



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clad throng at the Horse Show.

It is a common thing for considerable groups of people, sometimes quite a crowd, to wait around the stage door of the theater where Miss Adams is playing, to see her come out. Oftentimes they are disappointed—not at her appearance or non-appearance, but simply because they don't recognize her when they see her.

On one of these occasions, as Miss Adams was passing unobserved through the lingering throng, an English actor of her company who had chanced to leave the theater at the same time she did, said to her:

"How extraordinary! Now, what can all these people be waiting for?"

"To see you, probably," Lady Babbie replied demurely.

He shook his head—he knew better than that—but he kept muttering to himself, "I wonder."

Why all this aloofness and mystery, in America's most popular actress?



Maude Adams as Peter Pan and Rosalind; in "The Jesters" and "Chanticleer." In "Chanticleer" only did she fail of the highest success

The boy in "Never Never Land" who never grew up

The answer is simple, when you know it, and rather pathetic. It is that this valiant spirit in a frail and delicate body gives about nine-tenths of itself as a willing sacrifice to the great public, on evenings and matinées; and the remaining tenth is devoted not so much to her own pleasure as to restoring the wear and tear of past performances and replenishing the stock of enthusiasm and ideals for those to come. She practically says to her friends:

"If you love me, leave me alone. I have neither the fancy nor the physical strength for society, and all the 'temperament' I have goes into my acting. What should anybody care about the shadows and half-tones of my life?"

It was near the beginning of her career that she ex-



"Peter Pan," and "What Every Woman Knows."

It is a queer fact that Barrie has never seen Maude Adams in any of his plays, and has never seen her act at all since that night, more than



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claimed, with perhaps only half-serious impulsiveness, "Duse never gives interviews—I guess I won't." She guessed right, and has religiously stuck to that rule ever since.

Courage and cheerfulness are the secret of her dauntless bearing and the strange, haunting music of her voice.

The chief turning-point in the eventful theatrical history of Maude Adams occurred about fifteen years ago, on the occasion of J. M. Barrie's first visit to America.

On the eve of his departure for home, Barrie chanced to see "Rosemary," and was so impressed by the leading lady in that production that the next day, instead of sailing for England as he had intended, he sought out Manager Frohman and said, "If I can have Miss Adams for Lady Babbie, I'll make you a winning play out of 'The Little Minister.'" Mr. Frohman told him to go ahead—and that was the start of the memorable series which includes "Quality Street,"

Maude Adams as Joan of Arc when the play was given in the Harvard Stadium, and as Rosalind in the open-air performance of "As You Like It," at Berkeley, California

a dozen years ago, when he first beheld her in "Rosemary."

Fancy what he has in store—for he is expected in New York before the Christmas holidays.

The rest of us have something large to look forward to also, for preparations are well under way for the next Barrie-Maude Adams play,

"The Legion of Leonora." We expect it to increase our faith in Maude Adams.